WNYU Prospectus (1966)

WNYU is the radio station of New York University, with studios at University Heights and Washington Square. Since the founding of the uptown branch more than fifteen years ago, the station has operated via carrier-current transmission--a low-power, limited range method of broadcasting that enables it to be heard at 800 AM only in buildings where we have transmitters (the dormitories of NYU). With the completion of our five-year project to obtain a high-power, educational FM license (now in its final stages), we will broadcast to the entire city at 89.1 mc, while continuing campus-oriented programming on AM.

With a few exceptions (such as alumni members, students from other schools, et.al.), WNYU is managed and staffed solely by students at New York University. This, and our present system of carrier-current broadcasting are the only differences between WNYU and a professional radio station.

Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult for newcomers to understand that WNYU is not a club, nor is it a "ham" radio operation. Though few members have or expect to have professional status in broadcasting, the entire staff aims at attaining and maintaining professional standards of quality and competence. Membership in WNYU is not a matter of attending meetings (which are infrequent and strictly to fulfill constitutional obligations), but of working as much as necessary to accomplish whatever tasks you have accepted, whether in production, technical engineering, or management.

Freshmen may be dismayed at first by the differences between WNYU and activities they may have participated in in high school, especially in the areas of faculty supervision and management structure. WNYU is truly a student-run organization; the only supervision by the faculty or administration of the University is through our faculty advisor and our Board of Advisors. The former (Lawrence J. Hollander, Assistant to the Dean of the School of Engineering and Science) is really only an advisor and exercises no control over the operation, though he gives us much needed assistance in various areas. The latter was created to oversee in a broad sense the operation of the future FM station, and its function is more to advise us and to make suggestions when needed than to control us. The difference between WNYU's management structure and that of high-school type activities is that there is only one post that must be filled in any year, that of Station Manager. Other management positions are created and filled at the discretion of the Station Manager according to the current needs of the station and the abilities of individual staff members. Thus there are no empty titles or authority without responsibility.

Motives for working at WNYU are as various as the members themselves. Students intending to go into broadcasting as a profession become part of the top management more often than others (chiefly because they are more interested in it and because they can afford to spend more time at it), but the proportion of such people in the total membership is small. Other reasons for joining are more common. There are those who join because they enjoy being heard on the air (and they're welcome if they are worth hearing). Others join because of special knowledge or interest in a particular field, such as clas-

sical music or electrical engineering--either to learn more or to use the knowledge they already have. Still others are simply seeking a creative outlet for their spare time and energy, and have found that WNYU suits their tastes. Members are encouraged to benefit from their work at WNYU in any (legal and honest) way they can, and many have found that the more that they put into the station in time and effort, the more they get out of it in enjoyment, satisfaction, knowledge, professional contacts, and so forth.

There is no caste system at WNYU, no distinction between freshmen and upperclassmen, no segregation of new members and old, no "junior" or "probationary" memberships. The only distinctions are those of authority and responsibility, which are determined by ability and willingness to work, not by seniority. The Station Manager holds his position because he is more capable of doing that job than anyone else on the staff, not because he is the oldest or the most popular member, and the same can be said for all other positions on the station.

Artsmen and engineers are equally welcome at WNYU; their curriculum does not restrict them to certain jobs or positions. There are only two jobs that require special skills and prior knowledge--announcing and equipment maintenance. An announcer must have a naturally good voice and the ability to extemporize. The Chief Engineer and those who assist him must have considerable practical knowledge of electrical engineering, though they need not be majoring in it in the School of Engineering and Science. Practically all the other jobs at the station can (and usually must) be learned there; but there is no organized training offered to new members. The only way to learn a job is to observe and question those who are doing it, and to practice doing it yourself as far as possible. This is especially true of program production and operational engineering. The latter requires no special skills at all (except a reasonable amount of coordination and dexterity); a person can be taught how to engineer in a few hours, with nothing but practice needed afterwards. And we have found that artsmen are just as good at "engineering" as engineers; and the latter frequently display considerable talent in producing or announcing programs.

The time that one spends working at WNYU can vary widely. The management cannot guarantee that a member will only have to spend a certain specified number of hours working on station business. The only jobs with anything like regular hours are the engineering shifts, but all engineers must be reasonably able to work extra hours in emergencies. The time that you spend will be up to you; we only ask that it be sufficient to fulfill whatever responsibilities you have accepted. The time that that will take, no matter what job you are doing, will depend more on your skill and experience than on anything else. Newcomers will usually have to work considerably longer than veterans to do the same job, but they can expect the gap to narrow fairly quickly as they become experienced themselves.

Since at any one time our announcing schedule is likely to be filled (otherwise we wouldn't be able to get on the air each night with our planned programs), new members cannot expect to be given a program of their own very soon. Though there are usually a number of

personnel changes during the year, overall turnover of announcers is not rapid. The engineering schedule, however, is considerably more flexible, and new members wanting to engineer can usually have a slot of their own in a week or two. Many of our veteran announcers started by becoming engineers, learning as much as they could about the operation, and then moving into an announcing job when one became available. One of the best ways to learn how to announce and produce a folk music program, for instance, is to engineer one for a couple of months.

Anyone wanting to work at the station in any capacity should begin by coming to our studios on the third floor of the Gould Student Center and making his interest known to us. Someone at the station will take down your name, address, and particular area of interest and then an appropriate member of the management will contact you. Generally, newcomers interested in popular music announcing or producing should see Charles Joseph (213 Loew), our Program Director. George Jacoby is in charge of training and scheduling engineers. And anyone interested in working in any phase of classical music programming should see David Stein (off-campus, CY5-7092), the Classical Music Director. If your interests are not in one of these three areas, some other member of the management will contact you.

This Prospectus has only discussed the general aspects of WNYU; the details can only be learned first-hand. Again we invite you to visit our studios at any time, whether you have already decided you would like to join or whether you just wish to browse. We would like to conclude by saying that WNYU is one of the largest, most active, and most dynamic organizations in the University, and there are great opportunities for talented and enthusiastic new members in all phases of our operation. If you are such a person and wish to join, you will be most welcome.